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EFFECTS OF GOAL CONGRUENCE ON WITHDRAWAL BEHAVIOR,  
AS MEDIATED BY ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science  
in  
Psychology:  
Industrial/Organizational

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by  
Amy Ines Quinones  
December 2002

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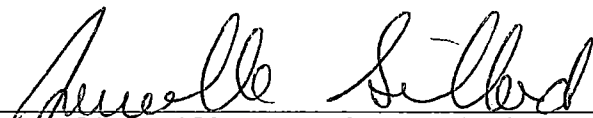
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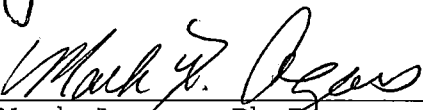
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by  
Amy Ines Quinones  
December 2002

Approved by:

  
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## ABSTRACT

Researchers have suggested that the alignment of organizational goals and personal goals strongly influences a variety of important work-related attitudes and behaviors, which consequently impacts organizational turnover. A variable that has demonstrated its importance in the work environment is organizational commitment, which has been linked to organizational outcomes such as turnover. Because goal congruence plays an integral role in constructing work environments that facilitate high levels of organizational commitment, the present study examined the potential effects of goal congruence on withdrawal behaviors such as intention to stay in an organization, intention to be absent from an organization, tardiness in three and six month periods, and actual attendance. Furthermore, the possible mediating effect of organizational commitment was investigated as an intermediary step in establishing the indirect link between goal congruence, and withdrawal behaviors. Participants, consisting of 124 male and female employees from a large U.S. organization, completed the Goal Congruence scale, Organizational Commitment scale, Intent to be Absent scale, Intent to Stay Scale, and Tardiness scale. A correlation-regression approach was adopted to

test the proposed hypotheses. The results indicated both a mediating effect of organizational commitment, and a direct effect of goal congruence on some withdrawal behaviors. Implications and significance of the study are discussed in the context of an organizational setting.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Janelle Gilbert, for your motivating efforts, and persistence through this process. Your passion for this field is truly inspirational. I would also like to thank the rest of the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Yu-Chin Chien, and Dr. Mark Agars. Your dedication and support were instrumental to the completion of this thesis. Thank you to the entire I/O faculty for your hard work and encouragement, your expertise is an aspiration. Much appreciation is also given to the Psychology department, in particular, Luci Van Loon and Patricia Massei. Your support and friendship has been of great value. Thank you. A special thanks goes out to my family and dear friends. Your relentless efforts, constant support, and encouragement have made this entire experience fun and memorable. Thank you all!

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my loving family. My mom, Aminta, has always believed in me and encouraged me in everything that I do. My siblings, Olivia, Nestor, and Peter have always been there for me and watched over me. I could not have accomplished this endeavor without you. You are my inspiration.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Withdrawal behavior is defined as "any type of behavior that removes the worker from the work setting regardless of the circumstance provoking the behavior" (Dipboye, Smith, & Howell, 1994, p. 164). According to Mobely, Honer, and Hollingswoth (1978), withdrawal behaviors can be very costly to organizations. Effort vested by the employee in search of alternatives can take away from the effort and time spent performing job duties. Also, consistent turnover can cause many of the organization's resources to be exhausted in the recruitment, selection, and training of new employees. Thus withdrawal behavior can be detrimental to the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations. It is critical for organizations to understand the antecedents of withdrawal.

Research studies in the past have examined job related attitudes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction, in relation to withdrawal behavior. However, the investigation of goal congruence in relation to an individual's withdrawal behavior has not been a

major focus in such research. It is important to consider this relationship. There is evidence that suggest that goal congruence, mediated by organizational commitment, can have an effect on worker attitudes and behaviors, such as a decline in organizational turnover. For example, the more an employee's goals match the organizational goals, the more likely the employee is to be committed to the organization and its goals (Koslowsky, 1990; Newman, 1975; Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991). If an increase in an individual's goal congruence leads to an increase in organizational commitment, then it should follow that withdrawal behavior will decrease. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to test the proposition that the influence of goal congruence on withdrawal behavior is indirect, mediated by organizational commitment.

### Goal Congruence

The perceived and actual match between job goals and organizational goals, the agreement on and acceptance of organizational goals, and the belief that the goals are shared demonstrates goal congruence. According to Schein (1985), organizational goals reflect the values and commitments of the founders and leaders of the organization. Schneider (1987) pointed out that

organizational goals are an important point of comparison between individuals and the organizations for which they are employed.

Goal congruence influences a person's withdrawal behavior in an organization, although its affect may be indirect, mediated by an individual's organizational commitment. More specifically, an individual whose personal goals are highly congruent with the goals of the organization will be more committed to the organization, and therefore exhibit less withdrawal behavior. According to Ajzen (1991), an individual's intentions to stay in an organization, add to our understanding of the motivational factors that influence the individual's effort to continue with that organization. Goal congruence can be a very important motivational factor. Individuals who make the connection between their personal goals and the organizational goals will have a stronger intention to stay within an organization. Goal congruence may be a factor that can be manipulated to decrease turnover in organizations.

A study conducted by Paolillo and Jackson (1986) outlined several strategies for achieving individual-organization goal integration. The researchers defined the term goal integration as "a congruence between

the goals of the members of the organization and the organization itself" (Paolillo & Jackson, 1986, p. 386). The researchers postulated that the congruence between individuals' goals and the goals of the organization can be defined as goal acceptance. From this, it can be inferred that individuals accept organizational goals because of the perceived or actual fit between their goals and the organization's goals.

#### Organizational Commitment

A commonly cited definition of organizational commitment is that of Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982, p. 27). They defined organizational commitment as:

the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Conceptually, it can be characterized by at least three factors: a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organizations goals and values; b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.

In addition, Allen and Meyer (1990) defined organizational commitment as distinguished by three empirically and conceptually separate components, identified as continuance, normative, and affective

commitment. These components reflect distinct psychological states. "Employees with strong continuance commitment remain in an organization because they need to, those with strong normative commitment remain because they feel they ought to do so, and those with strong affective commitment remain because they want to" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 3). Stated another way, continuance commitment refers to the perceived costs to leaving an organization, normative refers to commitment based on obligation and responsibility to the organization, and finally, affective commitment refers to attachment to the organization such that the individual identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Affective commitment is especially important since it is related to how strongly people desire to continue working for an organization because they agree with its underlying goals and values (Dipboye, Smith, & Howell, 1994, p. 174).

In the present study, "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values" (Mowday et al., 1982, p. 27), and affective commitment, according to Allen and Meyer (1990) is of special relevance. It is believed that employees will recognize a relationship between their personal job goals and the goals of the

organization, and thus accept those goals. This relationship will in turn affect organizational commitment, specifically affective commitment.

Hawk and Sheridan (1999) conducted a review demonstrating that in order to prevent lower level employees from leaving the organization, employees must understand the goals of the organization, and how they are directly tied to their personal job goals (Hawk & Sheridan, 1999). The connection between personal job goals and organizational goals directly affects organizational commitment when employees see how their individual performance affects the overall organizational and thus contribute to the performance of the organization. Employees need to believe that their actual job performance contributes to the bottom line (Hawk & Sheridan, 1999). When employees perceive that their job goals and organizational goals are consistent, their organizational commitment is thereby strengthened (Adams, Laker, & Hulin, 1977).

#### Withdrawal

Many studies have been conducted investigating aspects associated with an employee's withdrawal behavior in organizations. One such study conducted by Mobley (1977) identified some antecedents to withdrawal behavior;



thus outlining an employee turnover decision process. The sequence of behaviors which concludes with an employee leaving the organization includes antecedents such as: evaluation of current job, thoughts of quitting, evaluation of employment alternatives, evaluation of consequences of quitting (e.g., loss of benefits), intention to search for employment alternatives followed by the actual search, comparison of employment alternatives to current job, and behavioral intention to quit/stay followed by actual withdrawal. Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth (1978) tested a simplified version of Mobley's (1977) turnover decision process where job satisfaction was thought to indirectly influence turnover through other variables such as thinking of quitting, search and evaluation of alternatives, and intention to quit. The researchers were able to demonstrate that intention to quit had the only direct effect on withdrawal behavior, and that job satisfaction had an effect on thinking of quitting and intentions to search, rather than withdrawal behavior. These findings established that job attitudes do affect withdrawal behaviors.

Withdrawal behavior, as previously defined, refers to any sort of behavior that removes the worker from the work environment, no matter the cause for the behavior.

Withdrawal can be exhibited through a variety of behaviors. These include leaving the organization, absenteeism, tardiness, and passive job behavior. Absenteeism and tardiness are forms of physical withdrawal that can be directly observed. Absenteeism occurs when a person does not show up to work, and tardiness occurs when a person arrives to work at a time later than agreed upon. Hulin (1991) proposed a general theory of withdrawal cognitions which suggested that job attitudes lead to withdrawal cognitions, which then lead to different types of withdrawal behavior including tardiness, absenteeism and turnover. Rosse (1988) has empirically established relationships between absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover. For example, within two weeks after being tardy, the probability of an absence significantly increases. Likewise, within two weeks of multiple absences, the probability of turnover significantly increases.

It is important to look at intention to stay, intention to be absent, absenteeism, and tardiness as components of withdrawal behavior. These components are similar in that they contribute to removing an individual from the work environment in some manner. At the same time, these components vary in that they operate very differently by responding to the same antecedents in

different ways. For example, an individual that perceives many job alternatives may exhibit withdrawal by being absent or tardy frequently, and having decreased intention to stay. On the other hand, an individual that has no perceived alternatives may still exhibit increased tardiness and absenteeism and increased intention to stay. These differences are important because they demonstrate several conceptualizations of withdrawal behavior that are important to understanding its make up and function, and how it relates to other variables.

#### The Relationship Between Goal Congruence and Organizational Commitment

A great amount of research has been dedicated to the investigation of the antecedents of organizational commitment. Among the variables that have been identified is one's identification with organizational goals and values. A study conducted by Koslowsky (1990) identified a perceived fit between job goals and organizational goals as a factor of organizational commitment. This occurred through the observation of commitment differences between administrative and field personnel. In measuring organizational commitment, the researcher used the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire [OCQ] (Mowday,

Steers, & Porter, 1979), which compared participants' values with those of the organization (Koslowsky, 1990). Since this measure did not permit participants to impartially compare their job duties and the organizational goals, the participants were asked to make a comparison of their job tasks and functions (what they were doing at their job), with a clearly stated and recognized definition of the organization's goals (taken from the rules and regulation guidelines of the organization). Koslowsky (1990) found that field employees showed greater organizational commitment than administrative employees, which appeared to be a function of the perceived fit between job goals and organizational goals. Consistent with these findings, Newman (1975) suggested that there is a link between the perceived fit of goals and organizational commitment. The researcher postulated that employees' perceptions of their job goals were an intervening variable. In order to predict job attitudes such as organizational commitment, researchers should not only know where the employee falls in the structural hierarchy, but also, how the employee perceives the organizational environment (Newman, 1975). This research suggests that the perceived fit between personal

job goals and organizational goals is an important factor in building organizational commitment.

In a similar study, Vancouver and Schmitt (1991) investigated the relationship between employees' agreement on organizational goals and their attitude towards the organization. The researchers tested this by specifically measuring an individual's job goals and their organizational goal congruence. Vancouver and Schmitt (1991) focused on measuring the fit of goals between individuals in varying levels of the organization, and in individuals within the same hierarchical level. The researchers also examined actual goal congruence as opposed to perceived goal congruence. They postulated that measuring organizational member agreement is to measure a type of person-organization fit (Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991). It was found that organizational commitment was significantly related to goal congruence, and that the goal congruence within employees of the same hierarchy level appeared more important than goal congruence with supervisors (Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991).

Another similar study conducted by Tjosvold, Sasaki, and Moy (1998) tested the assumption that goal acceptance would lead to organizational commitment if the goals of the employees were shared and, that these shared goals

would lead to open discussion between the employees. The study used Deutsch's (1949) theory of cooperation and competition to investigate how interaction and interdependence of goals in organizations affect organizational commitment. Deutsch (1949) proposed that perceived goal interdependence affects the dynamics and outcomes of interaction. In cooperation, individuals believe that they have shared common goals and that if one of them makes a step towards achieving their goals, others will also take a step toward their goals and they will all be successful together. Conversely, in competition individuals believe that if one person succeeds it will interfere with the success of others. One person that reaches their goals makes it less likely that others will attain their goals (Deutsch, 1949). Tjosvold et al. (1998) extended this theory by suggesting that cooperative or shared goals facilitate the process of individuals discussing their views openly and freely. Increased feelings of employee involvement and positive feelings about employee relationships result in individuals being more committed to the organization (Tjosvold et al., 1998). It was found that when employees had cooperative or shared goals they were more likely to have open

discussions, which strengthened commitment to the organization.

Oliver (1984) examined the relationship between employees' values and goals and the characteristics of the organization. Specifically, the researcher focused on organizations where organizational involvement increased due to employee ownership. Oliver (1984) found that if employees were able to change their work environments to allow for satisfaction of their goals and values, employees showed strong organizational commitment. These studies suggest that matching job goals directly to organizational goals is important in understanding and predicting organizational commitment.

The relationship between goal congruence and organizational commitment is important because helping employees define their personal goals is a way of leading them towards achieving organizational goals. Individuals who make the connection between their personal goals and the organizational goals will be more strongly committed to the organization (Rohlander, 1998). Therefore, the relationship between organizational commitment and withdrawal behavior is important because the more organizationally committed employees are to the organization, the lower their withdrawal behavior within

that organization will be. Once this occurs, it can be assumed that employees with higher goal congruence will also have lower levels of withdrawal behavior within the organization, with this relationship being mediated by the individual's organizational commitment level.

### The Relationship Between Organizational Commitment and Withdrawal Behavior

Previous research has established a correlation between employee commitment and withdrawal behaviors such as turnover, absenteeism, and tardiness (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Cohen, 1993; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Porter, Crampon, & Smith, 1976). These studies of employee commitment have shown that organizations composed of committed employees are more likely to be effective due to increased effort in pursuit of the organization's goals, which leads to lower levels of absenteeism, turnover, and tardiness (Angle & Perry, 1981). The present study is designed to examine the effects of organizational commitment on withdrawal behaviors such as turnover - intention to stay in the organization, tardiness, and absenteeism.

Organizational commitment has been consistently linked to intention to stay in an organization. In a study



conducted by Somers (1995) the effects of organizational commitment on turnover and absenteeism were examined. Using Allen and Meyer's (1990) model of organizational commitment, Somers tested the specific relationships between each aspect of commitment and outcome variables of interest such as absenteeism and turnover. It was hypothesized that each component of commitment (affective, continuance, normative) is positively related to intent to remain with the organization, negatively related to turnover, and negatively related to absenteeism. In measuring job withdrawal intentions, Somers used Bluedorn's (1982) Index, and collected attendance data from personnel records to measure absenteeism. It was found that affective commitment was the most consistent predictor of the outcome variables. Affective commitment was also found to be the sole predictor of turnover and absenteeism, and in conjunction with normative commitment, was positively related to intention to stay in the organization (Somers, 1995). These results provide evidence of the effects of organizational commitment on withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and intention to stay in an organization.

A study conducted by Blau (1986) tested whether organizational commitment and job involvement had an

effect on absenteeism and tardiness. Blau postulated that "individuals with high levels of both job involvement and organizational commitment should be the most motivated to go to work on time, because they are attracted to the kind of job they have, and by the organization that they work for." The researcher found organizational commitment to be negatively related to tardiness, however, this relationship was not found between organizational commitment and absenteeism.

This inconsistency in the results related to absenteeism could be attributed partly to the recorded frequency level of absenteeism behaviors. In the previous study, absenteeism records were recorded for a six-month interval, taken two months at a time. According to Blau (1986), the problem exists in "the low proportion of variance in the absence behaviors accounted for." The researcher further explained that "low  $R^2$  values found involves the small mean levels and reduced variability of absence behaviors." In addition, this study was also constrained by a restricted work sample. The researcher assessed participants that were female nurses employed for an organization that had very specific definitions for absence behaviors. In contrast, Somers (1995) recorded absenteeism data for a period of one year, and used a

sample of both male and female nurses. In order to circumvent similar challenges, the present study measured attendance data recorded for a period of one year, and used a sample of male and female professionals from various levels within the organizational hierarchy.

In a similar study, Angle and Perry (1981) examined organizational commitment in relation to organizational effectiveness. Angle and Perry believed that "a committed member's definite desire to maintain an organizational membership would have a clear relationship to the motivation to participate. Willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and the belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals, in combination, have implications for the member's motivation to produce for the organization" (Angle & Perry, 1981, p. 2). The researchers hypothesized that organizations whose employees were strongly committed would exhibit both high levels of participation and production, and as a result, such organizations would show low levels of absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover. Angle and Perry measured employee commitment using the 15-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday, et al, (1979). Employee turnover was measured by collected statistics on voluntary termination, and by a

self-report measure of employees' intent to quit. Several of the participating organizations did not keep reliable attendance statistics, so tardiness was measured by using a ratio of recorded tardiness incidents to the mean number of employees during the previous year. A measure of absenteeism was obtained using a self-report employee questionnaire. It was found that organizational commitment was significantly related to turnover, intention to quit, and tardiness.

Hammer, Landau, and Stern (1981) conducted a study that focused on patterns of absenteeism and their predictors. Primarily, the researchers focused on the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism, and also examined the relationship of other predictors of absenteeism such as individual characteristics, age and education, characteristics of the job situation, and pressure to attend work (including factors of organizational commitment). In this study, absenteeism was measured using personnel attendance records, job satisfaction was measured using the General Motor's Faces Scale (Kunin, 1955), and organizational commitment was measured using items taken from the commitment questionnaire of Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). It was found that the main contributor to prediction of

absenteeism was organizational commitment. Employees who were committed to the organization were less likely to frequently be absent from work. Thus, organizational commitment is an important factor in the attempt to decrease absenteeism in organizations.

In a similar study, Shore, Newton, and Thornton III (1990) evaluated the relationship of organizational attitudes such as organizational commitment and satisfaction and behavioral intentions such as turn over, absenteeism, and performance. The researchers examined organizational attitudes using behavioral intentions as outcome measures, due to the belief that "intentions are important mediating variables between general attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment and behaviors such as turnover, intentions tend to be very predictive of behavior, and that intentions are determined by the employee" (Shore, Newton, and Thornton III, 1990, p. 58). The researchers used the 15-item OCQ (Mowday, et al., 1979) to measure organizational commitment, and used items modeled after the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, cited in Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981) to measure behavioral intentions such as intention to be absent and intentions to turnover. It was found that organizational

attitudes are strongly linked to turnover intentions, and absenteeism intentions.

### Purpose of the Study

Withdrawal behaviors such as turnover, tardiness, and absenteeism have consistently been shown to be related to organizational commitment. Further, organizational commitment has been shown to be influenced by goal congruence. In an effort to further understand the antecedents of withdrawal, it is important to examine the relationship between employees' goal congruence, and their withdrawal behavior, as it is mediated by their organizational commitment. In the present study, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is a relationship between an employees' goal congruence and their withdrawal behavior in organizations.

- a) A positive relationship with intention to stay. The higher the employees' goal congruence scores, the higher their intention to stay in the organization.
- b) A negative relationship with intention to be absent. The higher the employees' goal congruence scores, the lower their

intentions to be absent from the organization.

- c) A negative relationship with tardiness. The higher the employees' goal congruence scores, the lower their tardiness reports for 3-month, and 6-month periods in the organization.
- d) A negative relationship with attendance. The higher the employees' goal congruence scores, the lower their absences in the organization.

H2: There is a positive relationship between employees' goal congruence and their organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative). More specifically, the higher the employees' goal congruence scores, the higher their affective, continuance, and normative commitment scores.

H3: There is a relationship between employees' organizational commitment scores (affective, continuance, and normative) and their withdrawal behavior in the organization. The higher the employees' affective, continuance, and normative

commitment scores, the lower their withdrawal behavior in the organization.

- a) A positive relationship with intention to stay. The higher the employees' affective, continuance, and normative commitment scores, the higher their intention to stay in the organization.
- b) A negative relationship with intention to be absent. The higher the employees' affective, continuance, and normative commitment scores, the lower their intentions to be absent in the organization.
- c) A negative relationship with tardiness. The higher the employees' affective, continuance, and normative commitment scores, the lower their tardiness reports for 3-month, and 6-month periods in the organization.
- d) A negative relationship with attendance. The higher the employees' affective, continuance, and normative commitment scores, the lower their absences in the organization.



H4: It is also hypothesized that employees' goal congruence is related to their withdrawal behavior in the organization; however, this relationship is partially mediated by the employees' organizational commitment.

The relationship between goal congruence and withdrawal behavior is both direct and/or indirect. It is hypothesized that employees' levels of goal congruence will influence their withdrawal behaviors by organizational commitment mediating this relationship. Alternately, goal congruence may directly influence withdrawal behaviors.

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHODOLOGY

#### Methods

##### Participants

A total of 124 professionals were recruited from a transportation department of a large public organization in Southern California. This sample size was sufficient to insure a power of .80 for a medium effect size at the  $p < .05$  level (Cohen, 1992). In order to participate in the study, participants were required to be employed full-time (40 hours). Only one organization was used to keep withdrawal behavior organizational policies constant. The transportation and personnel departments were used to collect data. Bus drivers, clerical staff, and a few administrators participated in the study. Demographically, 55.6% of the participants were females and 37.1% were males. The participants ranged between the ages of 21 - 63 years old, with a mean age of 40.40 years old. In terms of education, 28.7% of the participants obtained up to a high school education, 52.5% obtained some college, 16.5% graduated from college, and 2.6% completed post-graduate studies. In terms of ethnicity, the sample was approximately 34% African American, 45% Hispanic, 15%

Caucasian, 1% Asian, and 5% classified themselves as "other." Number of years worked for the organization ranged from 2 weeks to 33 years. There were 41.2% participants who had been working in the organization under 5 years, 10.5% had been working 5 to 10 years, 28.1% had been working 10 to 20 years, 18.4% had been working 20 - 25 years, and 1.8% of the participants had been working in the organization over 25 years. Participants were treated in accordance to APA ethical guidelines (American Psychological Association, 1992).

### Design

In this study, a correlation-regression approach was adopted to test the proposed hypotheses. The predictor variable was employees' goal congruence, the criterion variable was employees' withdrawal behavior in the organization, and the mediating variable was employees' organizational commitment. Employees' goal congruence was measured with the Degree of Goal Congruence Questionnaire (Gilbert & Rodgers, 2001); employees' withdrawal behavior in the organization was measured with four components (intention to stay, intention to be absent, tardiness, and attendance). Intention to stay was measured using the Intent to Stay for Five Years Item (Kraut, 1975), and the Intent to Stay Index (Bluedorn, 1982). Intention to be

absent was measured using the Schneider (1996) Intention to be Absent Scale, and attendance was measured by using recorded employee absences. Tardiness was measured using a self-report measure constructed specifically for the current study. Lastly, employees' organizational commitment was measured with three components; that is, the Three Component Model of Organizational Commitment consisting of three scales, Affective, Normative, and Continuance Commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). All variables were quantitative and continuous variables.

#### Procedure

The organization was given a proposal summarizing the procedures, methods, and scales to be used in the current study. The participants were informed about the general nature of the study as well as the need to obtain their permission to have access to their attendance records. Participants were also asked to complete the questionnaires at their own discretion during non-work hours. The data was collected over a three-month period. Participants completed a demographic information sheet, and one questionnaire containing a total of seven scales. Also, attendance records were used to measure withdrawal behavior (specifically, absenteeism). It was explained to the participants that all responses were anonymous and

confidential. The three major scales (representing constructs) were arranged in six counterbalanced orders with demographic questions at the end. Counterbalancing was conducted using goal congruence, organizational commitment, and withdrawal behavior. Once the participants completed the questionnaires, they were sealed in envelopes and given to the researcher. At the end of the study, the participants were debriefed about the nature of the study, and its implications to the field. Also, the researchers contact information was given if any participant would like to further discuss the study.

### Measures

In this study, an informed consent form, which stated that participants were partaking in research measuring worker attitudes (see Appendix A), a demographic sheet (see Appendix G), and a debriefing statement (see Appendix H) were used, along with the following scales:

The Gilbert and Rodgers (2001) Goal Congruence scale (see Appendix B) developed from Cable and Judge (1996) was used to assess the degree to which employees' goals match the organization's goals. The scale consisted of three items total. Possible responses to each item ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely). An example item is "To what degree are your goals similar to your organization's

goals?" Participants' responses to the three items in the scale were summed and averaged to yield a score ranging from 1 to 5. Higher scores represent high goal congruence and low scores represent low goal congruence. Gilbert and Rodgers (2000) reported scale reliability (i.e., internal consistency) of .88, with additional validity correlates for measures of person-organization fit. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .84.

The Kraut (1975) Intention to Stay for Five Years Item and the 8-item Bluedorn (1982) Intention to Stay index (see Appendix C) were used to assess the withdrawal behavior of employees within the organization. The Kraut item asked, "If you have your own way, will you be working with this company five years from now?" This item has a five-point scale with the anchors "absolutely certain" (= 5) and "not at all certain" (= 1). The Bluedorn (1982) Staying Index asked "How do you rate your chances of still working for (name of company)" after each of four time periods: 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years. This five-point scale has anchors of "excellent" (= 5) and "terrible" (= 1). Bluedorn (1982) demonstrated a .90 Cronbach's alpha for this scale. After reverse scoring negatively worded items, participants' item responses to the nine items were summed and averaged to yield a score

ranging from 1 to 5. Higher scores represent high intention to stay within the organization, and low scores represent low intention to stay within the organization. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .85.

The Allen and Meyer (1990) Affective Commitment Scale (ACS), Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS), and Normative Commitment Scale [NCS] (see Appendix D) were used to assess organizational commitment in employees. Each scale consisted of eight items total. All items were designed to assess employees' commitment to the organization. Possible responses to each item ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Example items included "I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside of it," "It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to," and "I think that people these days move from company to company too often." A total of nine items were negatively worded, and reverse scored. Participants' responses to the eight items in each scale were summed and averaged to yield a score ranging from 1 to 5. Higher scores represent high affective, continuance, and normative organizational commitment and low scores represent low affective, continuance, and normative organizational commitment. Reported Cronbach's alpha

consistency coefficients are: ACS = .82, CCS = .75 and NCS = .79 (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Evidence for Convergent validity has been found for the ACS, evidence for discriminant validity has been found for the CCS, and evidence for both discriminant and convergent validity has been found for the NCS (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha consistency coefficients were: ACS = .71, CCS = .73 and NCS = .49. Due to the low consistency found for the normative commitment scale, the results of the scale were not used in any further analyses.

The Schneider (1996) Intention to be Absent Scale (see Appendix E), developed from Martocchio and Judge (1994), was used to assess individuals' likelihood of being absent under varying circumstances. Possible responses to each item ranged from 1 (Very unlikely I would be absent) to 5 (Very likely I would be absent). The scale consisted of thirteen items total, which were scenarios designed to measure behavioral intentions to be absent. Example items include "It has been snowing all night and the TV weathermen are saying that the roads are slippery and dangerous," and "You wake up for work almost an hour late because your alarm did not go off. You would really have to rush in order to get to work on time.



Besides, you have four sick days left for the year that you would lose unless you use them in the next two months." Participants' responses to the thirteen items (from 1 "Very unlikely I would be absent" to 5 "Very likely I would be absent") were multiplied to assigned weights for each item. Two items have a weight of '1', seven items have a weight of '2', and 4 items have a weight of '3' (Schneider, 1996). Each individual could have a scale score ranging from a low of 28 (if a participant gives a score of '1' for each), to a high score of 140 (if a participant gives a score of '5' for each). Lower scores represent a low likelihood of being absent, and high scores represent a high likelihood of being absent. The scale has demonstrated validity; it correlates with other concepts of the study related to absenteeism (Schneider, 1996). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for the thirteen items was .81.

In order to include a behavioral measure of tardiness, a self-report measure (see Appendix F) constructed specifically for the current study was used to assess the frequency individuals report being late to work. The questionnaire consisted of two scales; tardiness for 3-months scale, and tardiness for 6-months scale. Each scale contained three items total. All items were designed

as a frequency measure of employee tardies for a 3-month and 6-month period. Possible responses to each item ranged from 1 (0-1 times) to 5 (8 or more times). Example items include "On average, how many times are you late to work in a 1-month time period?" and "How many recorded tardies have you had in the past 6 months?" Participants' responses to the three items in each scale were summed and averaged to yield a score ranging from 1 to 5. Higher scores represent high numbers of tardies in a three and 6-month period, and lower scores represent low numbers of tardies in a three and six-month period.

Attendance Data (from personnel records) was also collected in order to include a behavioral measure of absences. Participants had the option of both consenting to the use of their survey responses and allowing access to their attendance records, or to consent to just use their survey responses only. A total 53 of the participants consented to the use of their attendance records. Electronic reports with attendance records were supplied by the organization. These reports were compiled from a benefit tracking system (or database) used throughout the entire organization. The reports included a total absence count for each participant and how each absence was classified. Absences were classified as

illness absences, personal necessity absences, worker's compensation absences, and unpaid absences.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESULTS

#### Results

Prior to analysis, goal congruence, affective commitment, continuance commitment, intention to stay, intention to be absent, tardiness (tardies in the past three months, and in the past six months), and attendance were examined through SPSS for accuracy of data entry, missing values, and fit between their distributions and the assumptions of multivariate analysis. Participants' responses were examined and all of the variables contained values within the expected range. Data were missing from the demographics of fourteen participants. Nine participants failed to report their gender and education, ten participants failed to report their race and number of years worked, and thirteen participants failed to report their age. The data collected from these participants was utilized in all of the analyses. Cases with missing values were not deleted from the data set since missing data did not account for more than 5% of the cases.

Using z scores and a criterion of  $p = .001$  all variables were examined for univariate outliers. The variables found to have significant univariate outliers

were: Attendance ( $z = 6.643$ ) with one participant whose attendance records indicated 67 absences in the past year, tardiness [3-months] ( $z = 3.787$ ) with three participants that indicated on an average being late to work four to five times, and tardiness [6-months] ( $z = 4.595$ ) with one participant that indicated on an average being late to work 8 or more times. These outliers were not deleted from the analysis. In the measurement of these variables, extreme cases were to be expected. In the case of Tardiness (3-months), although these participants' averaged tardiness score (3.50, for all three) was higher than the mean (1.30), the response was appropriate and consistent with what the scale was trying to measure. In the case of Tardiness (6-months), although this participant's averaged tardiness score (5.00) was higher than the mean (1.40), the response was also appropriate and consistent with what the scale was trying to measure. In the case of attendance, although this participant's attendance record indicated (67) absences, which is higher than the mean (4.94), the number of days this participant was absent was appropriate and consistent with that individual's attendance record. This participant's attendance record classified the majority of absences (62) under workers' compensation.

Multivariate outliers among the variables were examined through the use of Mahalanobis distance ( $\chi^2 = 26.125$ ) with a criterion of  $p < .001$ . One multivariate outlier was detected, but was not deleted. A standard regression was performed using goal congruence, affective commitment, continuance commitment, intention to stay, intention to be absent, tardiness (3-months, & 6-months), and attendance data as independent variables, and the Mahalanobis outlier as the dependent variable. This indicated that the variable attendance ( $p = .001$ ) caused the case to be an outlier. The participant was different in comparison to others because his/her attendance records indicated (67) absences, which was very high. However, it is feasible that psychological processes would contribute to an individual having such high number of absences. As a result, it was determined that this was a reliable representation of this participant's absenteeism, and the case was retained for further analysis.

The assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were examined through an examination of scatter plots of residuals and predicted scores. There was evidence that these assumptions were met, even though attendance data ( $z = 17.972$ ,  $z = 60.476$ ), tardiness

[3-months] ( $z = 9.62$ ,  $z = 9.41$ ), and tardiness [6-months] ( $z = 14.80$ ,  $z = 36.85$ ) were positively skewed due to the outlier. Also, intention to stay ( $z = -4.64$ ), was slightly negatively skewed. These outcomes were moderate; therefore, the transformation of data was not warranted. Additionally, there was no evidence of multicollinearity or singularity. Finally, the three major scales were examined for ordering effects. None were found. After evaluation of the assumptions, the major analyses were performed on all 124 cases. Analyses performed using the attendance data collected, were conducted with 53 cases.

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and internal consistency reliabilities for the six main scales, the additional three questions with fill in reports of absenteeism and lateness, and the acquired attendance records. The table shows the participants' assessments of goal congruence, affective commitment, and continuance commitment to be consistently around the mid point of their five-point scales. Participants' assessment of intention to stay was found to be on the higher end of the five-point scale, demonstrating fairly high ratings. The opposite was found on the participants' assessment of intention to be absent. The mean was toward the moderate

to lower end of the five-point scale, representing moderately low scores of intentions to be absent.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach's Alpha for Goal Congruence, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Intention to Stay, Intention to be Absent, and Tardiness Scales

Scales	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	$\alpha$
Goal Congruence	3.54	0.88	.84
Affective Commitment	3.22	0.77	.71
Continuance Commitment	3.58	0.82	.73
Intention to Stay	4.34	0.72	.85
Intention to be Absent	2.36	0.70	.81
Tardiness (3-month)	1.30	0.58	--
Tardiness (6-month)	1.40	0.07	--
Attendance Data	4.94	9.34	--

Participants' assessment of tardiness was found to be on the lower end of the five-point scale, demonstrating fairly low ratings. In addition, a very low variability was found for 6-month tardiness reports.

The proposed hypotheses were tested using the following statistical procedures: bivariate and partial correlations, and Multiple Regression analyses using the



Sobel Test (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2001). The Sobel Test was utilized as a more conservative method for understanding mediated relationships. Preacher & Leonardelli (2001) prescribed specific steps in order to perform the analysis to test mediation. The researchers summarized as follows:

Mediation can be said to occur when 1) The independent variable significantly affects the mediator, 2) The independent variable significantly affects the dependent variable in the absence of the mediator, 3) The mediator has a significant unique effect on the dependent variable and 4) The effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable shrinks upon the addition of the mediator to the model. (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2001, p. 1)

In order to test the mediation relationship, the procedures described above were followed. Steps 1, 2, and 3 were examined in the analyses of hypotheses 1 thru 3 using bivariate correlations. Step 4 was analyzed using linear regressions and the Sobel test.

### Correlations

Table 2 shows the intercorrelations among the three main variables goal congruence, organizational commitment, and withdrawal behavior.

Table 2. Intercorrelations between Goal Congruence, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Intention to Stay, Intention to be Absent, Tardiness Scales and Attendance Data

Scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Goal Congruence	--	.34**	.14	.37**	-.35**	-.26**	-.19*	.14
2. Affective Commitment		--	.31**	.44**	-.29**	-.18*	-.19*	-.07
3. Continuance Commitment			--	.43**	-.04	-.22*	-.17	.05
4. Intention to Stay				--	-.13	-.27**	-.26**	.17
5. Intention to be Absent					--	.31**	.19*	.07
6. Tardiness (3-month)						--	.77**	.02
7. Tardiness (6-month)							--	.08
8. Attendance Data								--

Note. \*\*p <.01 level, \*p <.05

Hypothesis 1 proposed a relationship between employees' goal congruence, and their withdrawal behavior in organizations. Part (a) of the hypothesis proposed a positive relationship between employees' goal congruence, and their intention to stay in the organization. This part of the hypothesis was supported. There was a significant positive correlation between goal congruence and intention to stay ( $r = .37$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In other words, higher levels of goal congruence were associated with higher levels of intention to stay. Part (b) of the hypothesis proposed a negative relationship between employees' goal congruence, and their intention to be absent from the organization.

This part of the hypothesis was also supported. There was a significant negative correlation between goal congruence and intention to be absent ( $r = -.35$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Accordingly, higher levels of goal congruence were related to lower levels of intention to be absent. Part (c) of the hypothesis proposed a negative relationship between goal congruence and tardiness reports for 3-month and 6-month time periods. This hypothesis was also supported. There was a significant negative correlation between goal congruence and reported tardiness (3-month:  $r = -.26$ ,  $p < .01$ , & 6-month:  $r = -.19$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The higher the levels of goal congruence, the lower the reported tardies were for 3-month and 6-month time periods. Part (d) of the hypothesis proposed a negative relationship between goal congruence and attendance. This part of the hypothesis was not supported. As a result, attendance records were not investigated as part of the mediation model proposed in hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 2 proposed a positive relationship between employees' goal congruence and their organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative). This hypothesis was supported in part: there was a significant positive correlation between goal congruence and affective commitment ( $r = .34$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In other words, higher

levels of goal congruence were associated with higher levels of affective commitment. A significant relationship was not found between goal congruence and continuance commitment; therefore, continuance commitment was not investigated as a mediator.

Hypothesis 3 proposed a relationship between employees' organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative), and their withdrawal behavior in organizations. Part (a) of the hypothesis proposed a positive relationship between employees' affective, continuance, and normative commitment, and their intention to stay in the organization. This part of the hypothesis was supported. There was a significant positive correlation between both affective and continuance organizational commitment and intention to stay ( $\underline{r} = .44$ ,  $\underline{p} < .01$ ;  $\underline{r} = .43$ ,  $\underline{p} < .01$ , respectively). In other words, higher levels of both affective and continuance organizational commitment were associated with higher levels of intention to stay. Part (b) of the hypothesis proposed a negative relationship between employees' affective, continuance, and normative commitment, and their intention to be absent from the organization. This was partially supported. There was a significant negative correlation between affective commitment and intention to

be absent ( $\underline{r} = -.29$ ,  $\underline{p} < .01$ ). Higher levels of affective commitment were related to lower levels of intention to be absent. A significant relationship was not found between continuance commitment and intention to be absent. Part (c) of the hypothesis proposed a negative relationship between affective, continuance, and normative commitment and tardiness reports for 3-month and 6-month time periods. This part of the hypothesis was supported. Significance was found in the correlation between affective commitment and reported tardiness (3-month:  $\underline{r} = -.18$ ,  $\underline{p} < .05$ , and 6-month:  $\underline{r} = -.19$ ,  $\underline{p} < .05$ ). The higher the levels of affective commitment, the lower the reported tardies are for 3-month and 6-month time periods. Significance was also found for the correlation between continuance commitment and reported tardiness (3-month:  $\underline{r} = -.22$ ,  $\underline{p} < .05$ ). Significance was not found between continuance commitment and reported tardiness (6-month). Accordingly, the higher the levels of continuance commitment, the lower the reported tardies are for a 3-month time period. Part (d) of the hypothesis proposed a negative relationship between affective, continuance, and normative commitment and attendance. This part of the hypothesis was not supported. Neither affective nor

continuance commitment were found to be correlated to attendance records.

### Sobel Test

Hypothesis 4 proposed that the relationship between goal congruence and withdrawal behaviors (intention to stay, intention to be absent, tardiness, and attendance) was mediated by organizational commitment. Following the bivariate correlations, the possible mediation in hypothesis 4 was examined with multiple regression analysis using the Sobel Test. In order to analyze the last condition of the mediated relationship, the Sobel Test equation [ $z\text{-value} = a*b/\text{SQRT}(b^2*s_a^2 + a^2*s_b^2)$ ] (MacKinnon & Dwyer, 1994; MacKinnon, Warsi, & Dwyer, 1995), was calculated using the unstandardized coefficients from the linear regressions of the salient relationships.

Initially, hierarchical regressions were run to obtain the information needed for the Sobel Analysis. Next, the Sobel Test was conducted in order to discover if the indirect effect of goal congruence on withdrawal behavior through affective organizational commitment was significantly different from zero. As table 3 indicates, this hypothesis was supported. The effect of goal congruence on intention to stay through affective

commitment was found to be significant ( $z = 3.009$ ,  $p = .002$ ).

Table 3. Sobel Analysis

Scale	Affective commitment	
	<u>statistic</u>	<u>p-value</u>
Intention to Stay	3.009	.002
Intention to be Absent	2.045	.041
Tardiness (3-month)	.129	.897
Tardiness (6-month)	.832	.405

In other words, the relationship between goal congruence and intention to stay was mediated by affective commitment. Also, the effect of goal congruence on intention to be absent through affective commitment was found to be significant ( $z = 2.0455$ ,  $p = .0408$ ).

Accordingly, the relationship between goal congruence and intention to be absent is mediated by affective commitment. Furthermore, the indirect effects of goal congruence on tardiness through affective commitment (3-month:  $z = .129$ ,  $p = .897$ , & (6-month:  $z = .832$ ,  $p = .405$ ), were not found to be significant. In other words, the relationships between goal congruence and

tardiness (3 & 6 month) were not mediated by affective commitment. These relationships were direct.

As a follow-up, partial correlations were conducted to further analyze the results of the hypothesis. The Sobel analysis revealed mediated relationships, but the extent of the mediation (partial or full) was not revealed. Consequently, the partial correlations were examined for those relationships with significant mediating effects as demonstrated by the Sobel Test. First, the relationship between goal congruence and intention to stay (controlling for affective organizational commitment) was examined. As table 4 indicates, the partial correlation between goal congruence and intention to stay ( $r = .26$ ) controlling for affective commitment was significant ( $p < .05$ ). This suggests that the mediating effect as shown by the Sobel Test was partial.



Table 4. Partial Correlations between Goal Congruence and Intention to Stay, Intention to be Absent, and Tardiness (3-month & 6-month) Controlling for Affective Commitment

	Intention to Stay	Intention to be Absent	Tardiness (3-month)	Tardiness (6-month)
Controlling for affective commitment...				
Goal Congruence	.26*	-.10	-.26	-.20

Note. \* $p < .05$

Next, the relationship between goal congruence and intention to be absent (controlling for affective commitment) was examined. The partial correlation between goal congruence and intention to be absent ( $r = -.10$ ) controlling for affective commitment was not significant ( $p > .05$ ). Therefore, as demonstrated by the Sobel Test, the relationship between goal congruence and intention to be absent is fully mediated by affective commitment.

Attendance data was not examined in the mediation tests because it did not reveal correlations with any of the variables.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Discussion

The current study has contributed to our understanding of the construct of goal congruence and how it is related to employees' organizational commitment and their withdrawal behavior. The main purpose of this study was to examine whether the relationship between goal congruence and withdrawal behavior was mediated by organizational commitment. In order to test this, it was first necessary to establish the direct links between goal congruence and withdrawal behavior, goal congruence and organizational commitment, and organizational commitment and withdrawal behavior.

Hypothesis 1 tested the correlation between employees' goal congruence and their withdrawal behavior, specifically, their intention to stay, intention to be absent, tardiness, and attendance. This hypothesis was supported, given that employees' goal congruence was positively related to employees' intentions to stay in the organization, and it was negatively related to employees' intentions to be absent, and tardiness behaviors. This finding suggests that the closer the employees' personal

goals are aligned with the organization's goals, the more likely they are to remain in the organization, and the less likely they are to have intentions to be absent and exhibit tardiness.

Adams, Laker, and Hulin, (1977) postulated that when employees perceive consistency between their personal goals and the organizational goals, commitment to the organization is thereby strengthened. Hypothesis 2 is consistent with their findings. It tested the correlation between employees' goal congruence and their organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative). This hypothesis was supported since employees' goal congruence was positively related to their affective organizational commitment. Affective commitment in this case was especially relevant because it pertains to an attachment to the organization consisting of identification, involvement and membership in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). It can be implied that acceptance of organizational goals strengthened this attachment to the organization. Furthermore, the lack of support for the relationship between goal congruence and continuance commitment could be explained since the close alignment of job goals and organizational goals may have a small or no effect on an individual's perception of the

costs associated with leaving an organization. It may be that acceptance of goals does influence an emotional attachment to an organization, but does not influence how and to what extent a person perceives the costs of leaving the organization.

Consistent with past research, it was found that employees' organizational commitment was related to their withdrawal behaviors, specifically, their intention to stay, intention to be absent, and tardiness, thus supporting hypothesis 3. Employees' organizational commitment (both affective and continuance) were positively related to their intentions to stay in the organization. Also, only affective commitment was negatively related to employees' intentions to be absent from the organization, and tardiness for both 3-month and 6-month time periods. Continuance commitment was not significantly related to intentions to be absent and tardiness in a 6-month time period. These findings emphasize the importance of affective commitment, specifically, as it has been shown to be the strongest predictor of withdrawal behavior, specifically, intention to stay, intention to be absent, and tardiness. These findings are in accordance with that of Sommers (1995) in which outcome variables were most consistently predicted

by affective commitment. It can be suggested that withdrawal behaviors are affected by organizational commitment, highlighting the importance of strengthening affective organizational commitment.

A noteworthy finding consistent throughout the entire analysis was that the attendance data (assessed from personnel records) was not significantly correlated to any of the variables. This is interesting considering that attitudinal measures were related to withdrawal intentions. Although the measure of tardiness, where participants reported their tardiness behavior, was not based on intentions, it could be based on withdrawal cognitions, or perceptions of tardiness behavior based on attitudes. Thus, attendance data, versus tardiness measures, was the only actual behavioral measure of absenteeism.

An explanation for the above finding might be related to the makeup of the attendance data. The attendance data collected was not based on withdrawal behavior purely caused by voluntary absences. It also accounted for absenteeism caused by other circumstances not due to purposefully withdrawing from the organization. For example, in this study, a participant who happened to be an outlier had a total of 67 absences in one year.

Sixty-two of those absences were classified as workers' compensation. This participant's data was kept due to the fact that workers' compensation time off could be voluntary or involuntary withdrawal. In other words, a person's absences taken under workers' compensation are usually assumed to be involuntary withdrawal, but, it could also be a work attitude that leads them to voluntarily withdraw (using worker's compensation), or to not withdraw. This suggests a possible avenue for future research in exploring voluntary and involuntary absences.

The fourth and last hypothesis in the present study tested the relationship between employees' goal congruence and their withdrawal behavior (intention to stay, intention to be absent, tardiness, and attendance) as it is mediated by their organizational commitment. This mediation was examined using The Sobel Test and partial correlations. It was found that affective commitment partially mediated the relationship between employees' goal congruence and their intentions to stay in the organization. It was also found that affective commitment fully mediated the relationship between employees' goal congruence and their intentions to be absent. In other words, the relationship between goal congruence and intention to stay occurred partially because of the

presence of affective commitment. Also, the relationship between goal congruence and intention to be absent occurred fully due to the presence of affective commitment.

Tardiness was also examined, but no mediation was revealed. A plausible explanation for this result is that tardiness may not actually be a good representation of withdrawal behavior. It may be the case that tardiness is unlike a withdrawal behavior in that it is unplanned and caused by a variety of reasons that an individual does not have power over. Another explanation for the results found, is that there may have been a measurement error for tardiness. The fact that low tardiness scores were reported, and there was a very low variability found for the 6-month time period tardiness reports, indicates that participants may have been responding in a socially desirable way. People may not have reported a correct indication of their frequency of tardies because tardiness may be a behavior that is not affected by organizational attitudes. Tardiness could be the result of more individual occurrences such as traffic, accidents, automobile malfunctions, etc.

In summary, affective commitment was shown to be a mediator not only because it was solely related to goal

congruence, but also because it was the strongest predictor of withdrawal behaviors such as intention to stay, intention to be absent, and tardiness. Thus, it can be implied that affective commitment mediated the relationship between goal congruence and some indicators of withdrawal behaviors such as intention to stay and intention to be absent, because affective commitment involves an attachment to the organization such that an individual identifies with it, and enjoys membership in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). This attachment and identification with the organization was strengthened by acceptance and agreement with the organization's goals and values. Consequently, this affective organizational commitment, as strengthened by the congruency of goals, led to an effect on intentions to stay and intentions to be absent within an organization.

#### Limitations

There are several possible limitations that may have impacted the findings of the present study. First, one of the most important limitations relates to the measurement of withdrawal behavior. First, since the attendance data did not correlate to any other variable, there may be some concerns with the measurement of attitudes versus the



measurement of behavior. Attitudinal measures may not be the best predictors of behavior, but rather intentions. This is consistent with Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action. The researchers determined that behavior is not influenced directly by attitudes. Instead, attitudes influence behavioral intentions, which then consequently affect behavior. This could explain the finding in this study, in which attitudes such as goal congruence and organizational commitment influenced intentions such as intention to stay and intention to be absent versus behavior. Contrary to this finding was that of Hammer, Landau, and Stern (1981), who were able to correlate organizational commitment with absenteeism (also measured with actual attendance data). In this case, the researchers used different conceptualizations of absenteeism, which points out a possible cause for the limitation in the absenteeism data collected in this study. The measurement of withdrawal behavior could have been ambiguous. A person's withdrawal behavior may not all be due to voluntarily withdrawing from the organization, but may be affected by other circumstances that are out of their control (e.g., work related absences, conferences, and family emergencies). These other circumstances should also be taken into account in order to obtain a more

precise measure of absenteeism related to withdrawal from the organization.

A second possible limitation of the study is in regards to its generalizability. In order to keep withdrawal behavior organizational policies constant, only one organization was sampled. The results of the study may be particular of the organization because of its policies. This organization kept strict attendance records where all time away from the organization (outside of sanctioned rest days) was precisely recorded. Employees in the organization must use their needed time off accordingly with the benefits usage allowed by the organization. This creates a concern of whether the results could be generalized to other organizations that have different or very distinct withdrawal policies. For example, an organization may have policies that allow employees to compensate for their absences by allowing them to make up their hours at a later time, or use accumulated overtime hours to be able to be absent from work. All of this may occur with or without it being reflected on personnel records. Such flexibility may not only affect their attendance records, but also their attitudes about their job, and how those influence their withdrawal behavior.

Finally, there may have been a measurement error for normative commitment. Due to a low reliability of the normative commitment scale, it was not used in any of the analyses. Even with item deletion, the alpha reliability would not have increased above .50. One reason for the low reliability could be due to the interpretation of the actual items in the scale. The negatively worded items contained a few double-negative statements, making them more difficult to interpret. Also, the corrected item total correlations for these negatively worded items were negative, thus indicating that there was a problem with the items on this scale. It could be speculated that the sampled population misunderstood the items. Since the population consisted mostly of lower-level employees with a high school education, the items may have been confusing and difficult to interpret. But, a problem arises with this explanation since the reliabilities of the other scales were high, meaning the sampled population was able to clearly understand those scales and respond appropriately. As another possible explanation for the scale reliability problem, an inspection for errors in data was conducted, and none were found. As a result, an explanation for the low reliability of the scale could not be stipulated.

## Significance and Implications

Based on the findings of the present study, there are several practical suggestions that can be offered to professionals and practitioners in the field of Organizational Psychology. Past research, such as a meta-analysis and review conducted by Mathieu and Zajac (1990), has determined several antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment. The analysis supported relationships between organizational commitment and antecedents such as personal, job, and organizational characteristics, and outcomes such as job performance, and withdrawal behaviors (intentions and actual withdrawal). Mathieu and Zajac made the distinction that the magnitude of the relationship between organizational commitment and withdrawal intentions was much stronger than that of the relationship between organizational commitment and actual withdrawal behavior. As a result, Mathieu and Zajac suggested that "the influence of organizational commitment on behaviors is mediated by behavioral intentions" (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990, p. 185). From this perspective, the present findings expand the scope of past research on goal congruence, organizational commitment and withdrawal behavior. Goal congruence was related to certain withdrawal behaviors because of affective organizational

commitment. This finding is important because it contributes to our understanding of how goal congruence is operating on work attitudes so that it is effective in developing high levels of organizational commitment, and in turn, affecting withdrawal behaviors, specifically, withdrawal intentions. This indicates the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship of goal congruence to withdrawal behavior.

These findings provide valuable information for organizations to better understand what factors contribute to withdrawal behavior, and how those factors influence withdrawal behavior. The findings also highlight the importance for organizations to work on the development of missions and goals that are congruent with employees' goals. Another valuable contribution provided is that since affective organizational commitment did have a mediating effect on the relationship, organizations can make an effort to increase such employee attitudes as affective organizational commitment, and thus lessen the withdrawal behaviors exhibited by their employees.

To summarize, the study was conducted with the main objective of investigating the mediating effect of organizational commitment on the relationship between goal congruence and withdrawal behaviors. Such effect was

established given that affective organizational commitment, to varying degrees, mediated the relationship between goal congruence and withdrawal behaviors such as intention to stay and intention to be absent. Also, a direct relationship was found between goal congruence and tardiness. These findings provide a new outlook on the impact of goal congruence on withdrawal behaviors due to affective organizational commitment. Thus, it is possible to limit withdrawal behaviors in an organization by closely aligning the organization's goals to the employees' goals, by enhancing the level of affective commitment within employees of the organization.

APPENDIX A  
INFORMED CONSENT

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Informed Consent**

The study in which you are about to participate is designed to investigate work attitudes and behaviors. This study is being conducted by Amy Quinones under the supervision of Dr. Janelle Gilbert, Associate Professor of Psychology. The Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino, has approved this study. The University requires that you give your consent before participating in a research study.

The study is in the form of a questionnaire, and the measurement of attendance records. You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire that will take about 30 minutes to complete. The questionnaire includes a few demographic questions along with several questions on job attitudes. In addition, the researcher will need to assess your attendance records. Please understand that participation in this study is confidential. Each completed survey will be randomly assigned a number. This number will be entered with your name in a separate file, to which **ONLY** the researchers have access. This will be done so that the questionnaires complement attendance data. Please be assured that any information you provide and all attendance records will be kept in strict confidence by the researchers. At **NO** time will your name be reported along with your responses. All data will be reported in aggregate form only. Upon completion of data analysis, all identifying information will be destroyed. Results of the study will be available in the spring of 2002.

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. Please understand that your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during this study without penalty. You may also remove any personal data at any time during this study. If you have concerns or questions about the study, or would like a report of the results, please contact Dr. Janelle Gilbert at (909) 880-5587.

By signing my name in the space provided below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and understand, the nature and purpose of this study and that I freely consent to participate, and allow the researcher to access my attendance records. I further acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

I \_\_\_\_\_ **understand that participation in this study is strictly confidential, give my consent to participate in this study, and allow the researcher to access my attendance records.**

Today's date is: \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT:** Please complete the entire questionnaire. Once you are finished, return the entire questionnaire to the original envelope, seal the envelope and place it in the designated drop box. Make sure to keep the copy of the informed consent labeled '**YOUR COPY**' for your records. Thank you for your participation.



APPENDIX B  
GOAL CONGRUENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

### Goal Congruence Questionnaire

*The following questions measure the degree to which your goals match the organization's goals. Please rate yourself on the following items. Indicate your answers to the following statements using the scale below. Bubble in the appropriate letter for each item on the answer sheet provided.*

---

A -----	B -----	C -----	D -----	E -----
Not at all	Small degree	Moderate degree	Great degree	Completely

---

To what degree are your goals similar to your organization's goals?

To what degree do you strive for what the organization strives for?

To what degree do you agree with the goals of the organization?

APPENDIX C  
INTENTION TO STAY QUESTIONNAIRE

### Intention to Stay Questionnaire

*The following questions measure your objectives within this organization. Please rate yourself on the following items.*

*Indicate the extent to which you are not certain, or are certain with the following statement using the scale below. Bubble in the appropriate letter for each item on the answer sheet provided.*

---

If you have your own way, will you be working with this organization five years from now?

A -----	B -----	C -----	D -----	E -----
Not a all certain	Slightly certain	Somewhat certain	Moderately certain	Absolutely certain

*Please rate yourself on the following items. Indicate your answers to the following statements using the scale below. Bubble in the appropriate letter for each item on the answer sheet provided.*

A -----	B -----	C -----	D -----	E -----
Terrible	Not so good	So-so	Good	Excellent

---

How do you rate your chances that you will choose to still be working for this organization . . .

. . . three months from now (April 2002)?

. . . six months from now (July 2002)?

. . . one year from now (January 2003)?

. . . two years from now (January 2004)?

*The following questions measure your objectives within this organization. Please rate yourself on the following items. Indicate your answers to the following statements using the scale below. Bubble in the appropriate letter for each item on the answer sheet provided.*

A -----	B -----	C -----	D -----	E -----
Terrible	Not so good	So-so	Good	Excellent

---

How would you rate your chances of . . .

. . . quitting in the next three months (by April 2002)?

. . . quitting sometime in the next six months (by July 2002)?

. . . quitting sometime in the next year (by January 2003)?

. . . quitting sometime in the next two years (by January 2004)?

APPENDIX D  
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT  
QUESTIONNAIRE

### Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

*The following questions identify attitudes toward organizational values. Please rate yourself on the following items and indicate the extent to which you strongly disagree or strongly agree with the following statements. Indicate your answers to the following statements using the scale below. Bubble in the appropriate letter for each item on the answer sheet provided.*

A -----	B -----	C -----	D -----	E -----
Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

---

Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me.

I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization.

I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization.

Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.

It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.

Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.

I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one.

I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization.

One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available resources.

I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.

I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.

I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up.

I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.—

I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside of it.

It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization now.

I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.

A -----	B -----	C -----	D -----	E -----
Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

---

If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my organization.

I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization.

I think that people these days move from company to company too often.

One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here.

I do not think that wanting to be a 'company man' or 'company woman' is sensible anymore.

Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers.

This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that I believe that loyalty is important and therefore I feel a sense of moral obligation to remain.



APPENDIX E  
ABSENTEEISM QUESTIONNAIRE

## Absenteeism Questionnaire

*For the following questions, imagine yourself in each of the situations presented below. It is possible that the circumstances described would not fit your life or job situation (e.g., the scenario discusses car problems, however you rely solely on a bus or a train to get to work). This is okay; simply try to imagine what you would do if faced with that situation. Please indicate, **how likely you would be to be absent from work under the circumstances provided**, using the scale below Bubble in the appropriate letter for each item on the answer sheet provided.*

---

A -----	B -----	C -----	D -----	E -----
Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neither likely	Likely	Very likely
I would be absent		nor unlikely		I would be absent

You wake up for work almost an hour late because your alarm did not go off. You would really have to rush in order to get to work on time. Besides, you have four sick days left for the year that you would lose unless you use them in the next two months.

After a particularly busy time at work (e.g., you finished up a long, grueling project last week), you wake up one spring morning and it's beautiful outside. You get the hankering to take a mental health day. This shouldn't be a problem, since things at work are slow right now.

Your child was up half the night with a bad cold. What's worse, you think you may be coming down with it now also. However, you are in the middle of a big project at work, and it will put pressure on your coworkers if you are not there.

It has been snowing all night and the TV weathermen are saying that the roads are slippery and dangerous.

You hurt your back over the weekend playing sports or working around the house. You aren't really sick, but you know that by the end of the workday you will be sore and cranky. However, you have an important staff meeting today.

You have some major shopping to do before the weekend, and you know the stores will not be crowded today because it's a weekday. Besides, things at work are not extremely busy.

Again, you have some shopping to do and you want to avoid the crowds. However, imagine that things at work are very busy and you might miss a deadline if you are not at work today.

Suppose that you have some very important personal business that needs to be taken care of today, even though it is a weekday. However, you do not have any personal days left and you will need to call in sick to avoid losing a day's pay if you are absent.

A -----	B -----	C -----	D -----	E -----
Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neither likely	Likely	Very likely
I would be absent		nor unlikely		I would be absent

---

A very old friend or family member from out of town is visiting for the day, and you want to spend some time with them. Your lunch hour doesn't feel like enough time for a good visit. Work is neither extremely busy nor slow right now.

A close friend has suffered a death in their family. You would like to offer your support and condolences at the funeral, but the service is being held on a weekday morning. You will need to use a sick day, since your company only allows bereavement leave in the case of immediate family members.

Your child's teacher wants to meet with both you and your spouse (or just you, if you are a single parent) in the late afternoon. Your child has been having real problems in school lately, and you are quite concerned. However, you will need to take a leave without pay if you want to leave work early for this meeting.

It is Friday morning, you are taking a trip over the weekend, and you would like to get an early start and make it a three-day weekend.

Your car will not start or you just missed the bus this morning. It will be quite difficult to find another mode of transportation to get to work today.

*The following questions inquire about your attendance. Please be assured that any information you provide will be kept in strict confidence. At **NO** time will your name be reported along with your responses.*

*Please write in your response for each question. Thank you for your honesty.*

---

- 1) How many absences have you taken in the last 3 months (regardless of duration)?  
Do not include holidays, 'comp' days or vacation. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How many absences have you taken in the last 6 months (regardless of duration)?  
Do not include holidays, 'comp' days or vacation. \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX F  
TARDINESS QUESTIONNAIRE

## Tardiness Questionnaire

*The following questions inquire about your attendance. Please be assured that any information you provide will be kept in strict confidence. At **NO** time will your name be reported along with your responses.*

*Bubble in the appropriate letter for each item on the answer sheet provided.*

A -----	B -----	C -----	D -----	E -----
0-1 times	2-3 times	4-5 times	6-7 times	8 or more times

---

On average, how many times are you late to work in a 1-month time period (regardless of how late)?

On average, how many times are you late to work in a 3-month time period (regardless of how late)?

On average, how many times are you late to work in a 6-month time period (regardless of how late)?

How many recorded tardies have you had in the past month?

How many recorded tardies have you had in the past 3 months?

How many recorded tardies have you had in the past 6 months? \_\_\_\_ (*please write in*)

APPENDIX G  
DEMOGRAPHICS

## Demographics

*Please answer each general information question listed below.*

---

Age (in years) \_\_\_\_\_

Gender (please check one)

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

Highest level of education completed (please check one)

High school \_\_\_\_\_

Some college \_\_\_\_\_

Associate \_\_\_\_\_

Bachelor's \_\_\_\_\_

Master's \_\_\_\_\_

Ph.D. \_\_\_\_\_

Race or Ethnicity (please check one)

African American \_\_\_\_\_

Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_

Caucasian \_\_\_\_\_

Asian \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the length of time you have worked with this organization:

Years: \_\_\_\_\_

Months: \_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX H  
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

# **Debriefing Statement**

## **PLEASE DETACH AND KEEP**

Thank you for your participation in this study. At this time I would like to explain the purpose of my research. I am investigating the effect of goal congruence and organizational commitment on absenteeism and turnover. Current research on withdrawal behavior is being conducted in order to find relationships between concepts such as goal congruence and organizational commitment and employee absenteeism, tardiness, and intention to stay, in an effort to explore new approaches for decreasing organizational turnover. An even greater contribution may be that organizations can recognize the ways by which employee motivation is affected. We feel it is important for you to understand the purpose of this research so that you recognize the value of your contribution to further enhance our understanding of goal congruence and withdrawal behavior.

If your participation in this survey has raised any issues for you and you feel you need someone to talk to, please contact the CSUSB Counseling Center at 909-880-5040. The Psychology Department Human Participant Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino has approved this research. Dr. Janelle Gilbert supervised this study. If you have any questions of this study, you may contact Dr. Janelle Gilbert at (909) 880-5587. Again, participation in this study is confidential. Upon completion of data analysis, all identifying information will be destroyed. Results of the study will be available in Spring 2002, and will be reported in aggregate form. If you would like a copy of the results, please contact Amy Quinones at (909) 880-5587. Again, thank you for your participation.

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